

1834 > 1824 (adapt Cont)
2150

24.1.80
18.1.90
20.1.94

Praise the Lord from the thron [Luth. Num. #13]
Pater **OUR FATHER**

(Stravinski:
In Quieres 24)
Lord's Prayer
(Paul Peter Kingdon
2)

[As you must have heard by now, one phrase from this most familiar Christian prayer, the Lord's Prayer, serves this year as the theme for the annual week of prayer for Christian Unity:] Your Kingdom Come. It's a phrase we use so frequently. Today, let's think and pray about it, around it, a bit more than usual — use it, maybe, as a kind of "mantra", a short phrase to keep coming back to, to repeat often to oneself in the midst of doing other things, to raise one's heart to God in rhythm with going about one's ordinary daily life: as a brief prayer of faith, and of hope and of love to give an atmosphere, a heightened consciousness of being in the presence of God (as indeed we are, everywhere and all the time). Your Kingdom Come: it's a prayer of longing and hope, looking to the future, to the fulfilment of all God's promises, to the fruition of all that Christ has done in love for humankind, in our world, all that He's now working in us by the mystery of His grace and inspiration. Your Kingdom Come: a time and a state when we'll all, everyone, be truly brothers and sisters to each other in the love of Christ our Brother: when Christ will be "all in all" as the scriptures say of Him: when all of creation will have been renewed, restored, as St Paul wrote: a state that we Christians, at least, should be conscious is being brought about, painfully often, in the changes and growth Christ brings about in our lives. Your Kingdom Come: the reign of God, when He is recognized, freely accepted and revered as Lord and Father by everyone, His will the joy and happiness of all His creatures: a reign of peace, reconciliation between people, between the human family and their Father: a reign of freedom for the human spirit to reach its proper and full development and glory:

of justice in which everyone shares the gifts of God, in harmony and respect. But the reign of God, His Kingdom, has already begun in Christ: it is here, now in His presence, His grace at work in every Christian and indeed in everyone of good-will trying to be responsive to the will of God by whatever name He may be known. Your Kingdom Come: a prayer of trust and faith for now, this present time: that we may grow in maturity and wisdom in Christ, learning to live not for ourselves alone but for Him, with Him and in Him, together: that God's will may be accomplished in us, and through us in the world of today, His love and rescuing power for every person be visible and witnessed to in the work and words, the attitudes and care of all who profess to follow Christ and accept Him as their Master and Lord. Your Kingdom Come: a prayer for wisdom and knowledge (according to the early Christian writer, Origen): that we become so imbued with God that all our lives are a reflection of Him, knowing Him. A prayer for the Church (in the thought of St Augustine), the city of God awaiting and longing for its fulfillment. In all the different centuries of Christianity, the different understandings and interpretations of the meaning of God's reign, of the Kingdom of God as Jesus talked about it in the gospels, this prayer has continued to be made by Christians. This week, this year, we still pray those words together, whatever else divides us, in interpretations, misunderstandings, the way we each practice our faith. May we learn together the humble wisdom to seek and find God's will for us all, and to be the instruments of His grace that He wills

us to be. Let us pray ^{will run} (again) this prayer of the Lord, in song now: from the 2³ Small Lit. Orth. Slav. ^{step 1747} hymn - "All Our Joy is Orthodox Liturgy" ^{Peccatal host} MUSIC 'Our Father' PRAYERS Dec 70

It's been said that in the course of the history of theology, the interpretation of the term "the Kingdom of God" has constantly changed, in ways which echo the spirit of the age rather than the original meaning of the words. Certainly, today in English or other languages "kingdom" is an old-fashioned word, and what kingdoms still exist sound a bit out-of-date, and are quite different from the power-structures of even a 100 years ago. "Democracy", egalitarianism, seem more to the liking of the mood of our age; and so we may tend to a utopian understanding or a pietistic one, of the Kingdom of God. Be that as it may, why we pray together, and what we pray for is, basically, the unity and peace for which Christ prayed ~~for~~ for all His disciples, the communion and community of the People of God. Searching for truth is part of ^{that} unity, the truth about ourselves, about Christ, about God — and with our limited understandings, and many other factors, we will always have difficulties in reaching the fulness of brotherhood in Christ. How difficult, the tone of His prayer for us gives some idea. Yet for our part, we must work and search and share together, as we pray, all of us, for the coming of God's kingdom, that His will be done in us, in our world, as it is in heaven: and as we pray that He would forgive us our sins just as we forgive those who sin against us.